of which the Chinese believed the physical world to be composed
—fire, water, earth, wood, and metal.

In spite of his power of synthesis and his beauty of literary style, Chu Hsi's conceptions present great difficulty to Western students, and marked differences of opinion exist as to their meaning. Western and Chinese categories differ so greatly that it is next to impossible to transfer the one into the other and easy-going parallelisms are misleading. Occidental scholars have been divided over the significance of Chu Hsi's philosophy for theistic belief. Some maintain that he tended toward materialism, or at least toward a depersonalizing of the ancient Chinese conception of *T'ien.* Others declare that Chu Hsi gave to *li* the moral values of personality and that, while eliminating all physical anthropomorphism from his portrayal of *T'ien,* he held views which leaned essentially toward theism. Whatever may have been Chu Hsi's personal beliefs, the effect of his teaching seems to have been to strengthen the agnostic tendencies in Confucianism.
If he ascribed to *T'ien* personal qualities, it was in such abstract terms that for the great rank and file, even of the scholars, it became little better than impersonal law.

This Neo-Confucianism, it must be noted, was in several respects a departure from the views of the sage whose memory it professed to revere. Its withdrawal from the world for purposes of meditation, its views about sudden enlightenment, and its attempts to tell how the world came to be were all alien to the teachings of Confucius as found in the ancient records. At best they could legitimately claim only to be implicit in the sage's sayings. Yet members of the school seem sincerely to have believed that they were true to the spirit of

Confucius and their emphasis upon the *Lun Yii* (Analects), the *Ta Hsiiek* (Great Learning), the *Chung Yung* (Doctrine of the Mean), and the Book of Mencius was not mere lip service or an attempt to win adherence to novel ideas by professing to find for them the sanctions of antiquity, but sprang from a conviction of the authority and permanent value of these documents.

The views of Chu Hsi did not immediately win the unqualified acceptance of the majority of the scholar class. The followers of Wang An-shih of course opposed them. Even among the conservatives who denounced Wang An-shih and who may be classed